

Indifference

Webster defines the word "indifference" in several ways.

1. "Having a neutral or unbiased disposition."
2. "Not interested in or concerned about something."
3. "Apathetic; not easily interested or moved."
4. "Characterized by lack of active quality."

Some of the synonyms of the word "indifferent" are: unconcerned, incurious, aloof, detached, disinterested, unimportance, insignificance, coolness, carelessness, apathy, insensibility, nonchalant.

Indifferent About the Salvation of Their Own Soul.

When I teach others one of the things, I notice is their disinterest in God's holy truth. It is hard to believe they feel the way they do about eternity. There is a good chance that they will never know the truth because they are indifferent toward it. **But this is nothing new.** 2 Thess. 2:10-12 *“and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*

“Truth is avoided when it is painful. We can revise our maps only when we have the discipline to overcome that pain. To have such discipline, we must be totally dedicated to truth. We must always hold truth to be more important, more vital to our self-interest, than our comfort. Conversely, we must always consider our personal discomfort relatively unimportant and, indeed, even welcome it in the service of the search for truth.” (From *The Road Less Traveled*, by M. Scott Peck, p. 50)

An indifferent person will not accept any truth that will be painful to him. Let us genuinely love the truth that we might be saved. Prov. 23:23 *“Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.”*

Christians Can Be Indifferent About Spiritual Things.

I've known Christians who are indifferent toward worship in general. They often miss Sunday and Wednesday services through indifference. It is indifference that causes people to sleep, play with babies, pass notes, file their nails, and watch the clock during worship. (remember Lot's wife). Some are "bored to tears" with the whole worship service.

Jesus said of Laodicea, *"would that you were either hot or cold."* Rev. 3:15. Jesus wants us to be one way or the other. In other words, He wants us to be either zealous or dead, but not somewhere in between. Often when Christians know they are lost, they will repent. However, it is the lukewarm, the indifferent, who can't be reached. They think they are fine the way they are. The Lord told the Laodiceans to repent. Rev. 3:19

Some Christians are indifferent in their concern for one another. Jesus requires a new and higher standard of love. John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16. If we have genuine love for one another, other things will take care of themselves. Rom. 13:8; 1 Cor. 12:20-22, 25-27

The legendary football coach Vince Lombardi was asked what it took to make a winning team. He said, "There are a lot of coaches with good ball clubs who know the fundamentals and have plenty of discipline but still don't win the game. Then you come to the third ingredient: if you're going to play together as a team, you've got to care for one another. You've got to love each other. Each player has to be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself: 'If I don't block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken. I must do my job well in order that he can do his.' The difference between mediocrity and greatness is the feeling these guys have for each other." (Quoted in Leadership, Vol. 15, No. 3)

As members of the Lord's church let us truly love and care for one another. Let us take seriously the Lord's "new commandment" so that we can be a winning team.

Some Christians are indifferent regarding the rearing of their children. Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:15; 23:13-14

"Every baby starts life a little savage – completely egotistical and self-centered. Babies want what they want, when they want it, be it a bottle, mother's attention, or a dry diaper. Deny a baby these "wants" and he or she is seized with rage. Babies have no morals, no knowledge, no skills for survival. All children, not just certain children, are potential delinquents! If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of their infancy, where they had free rein to every impulse and had every want instantly gratified, all children would grow up in that mold of depravity. That is the stuff of which are made criminals, killers, and rapists." (From 1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 343)

Of course, there are a few exceptions to the above rule. Some small children have a wonderful, delightful disposition, and are very easy to discipline. However, most children require much diligence on the part of parents in using the "rod of correction" so that their souls can be saved.

Some Christians are indifferent toward upright, moral living.

When people become "bored to tears" regarding worship, their conduct toward moral, righteous living often becomes lacking. This can be seen in the way we dress; the activities we become involved in; behaviors we form.

Consider Rom. 2:4-5 *“Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.”*

What would you think of a doctor who, on discovering you had a tumor buried deep in your body, responded, "Take two aspirin and you'll be just fine." How about a fireman who responded to a three-alarm fire by saying, "It'll probably burn itself out soon enough," or a policeman who, on arriving at the scene of a robbery, merely shook his head and said, "Boys will be boys!"

In each case the response is inappropriate to the situation.

Often, brethren's response to the things we have mentioned is just inappropriate. Instead of avoiding and reproofing the sin, they become indifferent toward it. And, to become "indifferent toward sin" means they have become hardened and impenitent toward it.

Some Christians are indifferent toward lost souls.

If one is indifferent toward the saving of his own soul, certainly, he will be toward saving the souls of others. Let us think in the direction of lost souls in the church. Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20; Prov. 9:8b-9; Psalm 141:5

This is from Charles Stanley who is a member of a denominational church, but his words are well taken. He said, "A woman in our church was married for only a short time when she found out her husband was a homosexual. Soon after, he left her. As I talked with her, she said something I shall never forget. She said, "After I was divorced, several of my friends came to me and said they knew he was gay. When I asked them why they didn't say anything to me, they said, 'We didn't think it was any of our business.'"

Stanley said, "Her friends were dead wrong. After hearing her story, I made up my mind never to stand by quietly and watch a friend make what I was sure in my heart was a mistake. This resolution has made me very unpopular at times. People have left my church over things I have confronted them about. But when I start thinking that maybe I should keep my mouth shut, I always remember what Solomon said, ***“He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.”*** (Proverbs 28:23). I want to add, we must remember our duty to warn, reprove, and exhort. 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 5:11

Conclusion

If we are indifferent in these things, we lose our purpose for existence as God's people. Several years ago, the London Transit Authority had a problem. Buses were going right past passengers who were waiting at designated places to be picked up. They were at the bus stops, and the buses were sailing right past them.

The London Transit Authority released a statement to explain their actions. The statement said it was impossible for them to maintain schedules if they always had to stop and pick up passengers!

The London Transit Authority could have easily maintained schedules if they **picked up no passengers** at all. However, that would have destroyed their very purpose for existence.

When we become "indifferent" in the very things God designed for His people, we lose our identity as His people. We close with Jesus' words to Laodicea.

Rev. 3:15-20 ***“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”***